

**Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
Watershed Advisory Council Meeting  
March 30, 2016**

**Summary of Comments and Suggestions**

The annual WAC meeting was held on March 30 at the Westchester Community Center. Sixteen members of the WAC and participants from the general public attended the meeting and provided comments. Comments from five participants were also received through an online survey, accessible through the SMBRC website ([www.smbrc.ca.gov](http://www.smbrc.ca.gov)), from March 21 to April 8. The meeting included an overview of the SMBRC's Annual Work Plan and a facilitated rotating breakout session for group discussions and input on the work plan priorities. There were five breakout sessions/stations for each of the five work plan areas: water resource and quality improvement, wetland and coastal habitat restoration, marine habitat protection and restoration, education and outreach, and planning, monitoring, and program management. All meeting attendants were given the opportunity to participate in all five breakout sessions through rotation. Two staff persons were assigned to assist each station and took detailed notes during the meeting. The summary below was compiled from the detailed notes of the five sessions and comments submitted through the online survey.

**1. Water Resources and Quality Improvement**

Integrated water resources management

- Work with local cities to take a regional and holistic approach in planning water quality projects. Protocols used for designing water quality project by local municipalities should be informed by a regional context.
- Foster “a community of practice” where “water people” take a “crest-to-crest” approach on water issues through improved organizational cooperation and collaboration.
- Use SMBRC as the venue to provide better regional perspective, promote recycling every drop of water and the policy of no more “single use” water. Address the direct potable reuse issue by getting all entities together.
- Utilize this organization's capacity to bring all parties to the table and help to connect all the dots on a long-term issue which has not been addressed, i.e., how to deal with the more concentrated waste stream than what are currently going to the ocean.
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis that takes into account the impacts of wastewater effluent on Bay habitats. Rethink and bring in recycling option and mold the message of recycling water into habitat protection.
- Support new State Senate bill SB163 that will limit water discharge to coastal water and require recycle all the water.
- Play the role of confronting problems and find solutions ahead of the curve, such as the practical issue associated with SB163 due to the lack of demand for potable reuse of groundwater basin recharge of recycled water.
- Encourage West Basin to recycle all the wastewater instead of building desalination.

- Educate people on the different alternative of wastewater recycling versus desalination and the impacts on ocean environment. Look into potential funding opportunities through the Commission for this public education program. Collaborate and fund Surfrider Foundation to carry out this effort.
- Add a task led by the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority for recycled water seasonal storage project to minimize discharges to Malibu Creek.
- Add a task led by the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority, MS4 permittees and park agencies for conducting additional monitoring and studies to evaluate factors from both the upper and lower watershed that affect algal growth and benthic macroinvertebrate impairments in Malibu Creek.
- Participate in development of WRD groundwater basin plan recharging groundwater from wastewater and demonstrate the effects of recharging on the Bay.

#### Storm water pollution control and LID implementation

- Require good modeling and data collection for water quality projects to assure fiscal responsibility and accountability. Require water quality projects to follow strict post-implementation monitoring standards and procedures as a condition for awarding funding.
- Create a unified guidance on LID design together by various jurisdictions and agencies. Encourage the TAC and the Water Board to take lead on this effort.
- Make sure demonstration LID projects are represented in ALL five supervisorial districts.
- Prioritize EWMPs funding. Support and facilitate more Prop. 1. funding opportunities. Work with local cities (especially South Bay cities) to find funding for storm water capture and cleanup projects.
- Facilitate new rain garden projects. Foster greater collaboration with Surfrider Foundation for ways to get more funding to perpetuate its Ocean Friendly Gardens program (Surfrider Foundation)

#### Nonpoint source pollution control

- Encourage new County ordinances to combat pharmaceutical beach litter (e.g. needles) by requiring pharmaceutical companies to create a “take back” program and provide easy, public-accessible “take back” options.
- Address trash issue along lower Ballona Creek. Conduct more education/outreach on proper disposal of trash and fishing gear along the Creek.
- Make copper TMDL outreach a priority via boater program and seek more funding such as CWA Section 319) for copper TMDL outreach.
- Work with consultants representing the cities to outreach and encourage more cities to vouch for and join the Clean Bay Restaurant program.
- Have more coordination to avoid overlap between Surfrider Foundation’s Ocean Friendly Restaurants program and SMBNEP’s Clean Bay Restaurants Certification Program.

## **2. Wetland and Coastal Habitat Restoration**

#### Wetland restoration

- Devote more effort in building community support and educate people on the need for wetland restoration and the positives of what could come.

- Prioritize projects that would protect wetlands. Prioritize stormwater projects where pollutant loading is particularly damaging to a wetland.
- More public presentations on information related to Malibu Lagoon restoration, both successes and failures.
- Encourage State Parks be proactive in mobilizing volunteers to participate in removing non-natives at Malibu Lagoon.
- Promote lessons learned from Malibu Lagoon restoration and use the lessons to inform the planned restoration at Ballona Wetlands. Use insight gained from outreach before, during, and after the restoration of Malibu Lagoon as guidance for outreach associated with the Ballona Wetlands restoration project.
- Supports the Ballona Wetland iceplant removal project.
- Focus workplan more on implementing interim stewardship management and reconvene the “interim stewardship committee” for the BWER. Bring more community groups to participate in activities such as non-native removal at the BWER
- Hold more on-site educational events at BWER.
- Incorporate climate change planning into Ballona restoration – e.g. SLR; use new tools from Adapt LA and others
- Have more presence of law enforcement at the Ballona Ecological Reserve to intercede and deter the homeless, and reduce the problem of trash and fire-burning.
- Have more communication apart from mandated public comment period. Create more opportunities for agencies to solicit input beforehand and to communicate clearly on why decisions were made. Same applies to communication after the project’s completion.
- Incorporate stakeholder comments into development of success criteria for Ballona restoration process.
- Do more outreach to explain the Ballona Wetlands EIR to the public, and the thinking of the SMBRC TAC and the SMBRC Governing Board, especially for those who are not scientists.
- More stakeholder involvement in the Ballona Wetlands restoration project management team.
- More stakeholder groups involved and come together to talk about Ballona Wetlands restoration related issues. Hold quarterly meetings of all stakeholder groups for wetlands including scientists at local universities, TAC members and all the neighborhood groups.
- Hold another interactive WAC meeting during the Ballona Wetlands restoration public review period, including ample time for dialogue.
- Consider and explore how WAC might function more like a new and improved version of the Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force.
- Have more viewpoints posted on the Ballona Facebook page and Ballona restoration website page.

#### Stream protection and restoration

- Support stream protection ordinance.
- Explore more opportunities to advise, assist, and partner and collaborate with community organization such as Ballona Creek Renaissance/assist invasive plant removal, habitat restoration, and related outreach, education, and volunteer recruitment along Ballona Creek from the hills to the bay.

- Explore possibilities to develop and facilitate an Adopt-the-Creek Program and/or expanding the current creek cleanup operations by Ballona Creek Renaissance.
- Add the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority as a partner for projects for eradication of crayfish and other invasive species, along with studies to evaluate the impact of invasive species on stream health, in the North Santa Monica Bay/Santa Monica Mountains watersheds.
- Address the issue that recreational fishermen taking mussels from ballona creek and other places, which depleted the food source for birds in the area.

#### Climate change adaptation

- Incorporate climate change as much we can in everything we do. Help to facilitate integrated water research and management, involving stakeholder on both the Oceanside and freshwater side.
- Support and collaborate on projects that look at the impacts of SLR on coastal aquifers, beaches wetlands, and intertidal habitats etc., such as the “Coastal SEAS” project by Dr. Rich Ambrose at UCLA.
- Link different research tools to development management strategies such as NSF coastal seas, USGS basin model, new groundwater model, ModFlow, WarMer and CosMos.
- Collaborate with USC Sea Grant and LARWQCB in addressing climate change impacts on water quality.
- Continue engaging in the Adapt LA project and support more NOAA grant funding for modeling research on climate change impacts on coastal wetlands.
- Evaluate the impacts of future beach nourishment to LA beaches – compare to other climate change risk adaptation alternatives
- Implement the sandy beach restoration pilot project and scale it up to more beaches. Use scientific information gathered from the pilot to inform larger conversations with the County Dept. of Beaches and Harbors about beaches and the coast as well as the need to stop grooming a beach area.
- Form partnership to conduct projects that address the climate change impacts on salt water intrusion.
- Make sure County flood control protocols integrate climate change adaptation.
- Require Local Coastal Programs (LCP) incorporate climate change adaptation and mitigation. More involvement in LCP development happening in Santa Monica and Venice.

### **3. Marine Habitat Protection and Restoration**

#### MPA and fisheries

- Conduct more MPA monitoring underwater in addition to aerial surveys. Assess the relative effects of poor habitat quality vs. water quality in MPA performance.
- Address the need to implement milestones in BRP sections 4.2 and 4.3 set for 2015 including promotion of an adaptive MPA management strategy and enforcement plan, development and implementation of fishery management plans for high priority fisheries, studies to evaluate

effectiveness of SM Bay commercial fishing closure, promotion of outreach and cooperative research on fishery management, and increase of local wardens.

#### Beach habitat protection and restoration

- Develop more education programs about beach and intertidal habitats. Prevent disturbance of the habitat including stomping of the area by science research groups.
- Encourage County Department of Beaches and Harbors to remove non-native plants and adopt a native species list for planting to help restoration of native habitats at Dockweiler Beach and reduce dispersal of non-natives from Dockweiler to LAX dunes.
- Encourage County Dept. of B&H to change beach grooming practice for protection of bird habitats.
- More public outreach about beach native planting and looking at beaches as a habitat.
- More tidepool conservation and education along Palos Verdes Peninsula.
- Prioritize beach erosion mitigation and limit sand nourishment permitting (cf. Broad Beach). Also, prioritize “soft”/low-impact solutions to beach erosion to protect off-shore sand deposits and limit the need for beach erosion mitigation such as the one proposed for Broad Beach.
- Continue ecological assessments of beach nourishment.
- Coordinate bike path improvements with restorations and increase habitat connections, using the 60-mile big bike loop path funded by Orange County Transportation as a model.

#### Other

- Support artificial reefs projects.
- Get more involved in the Port of LA’s revitalization process.

### **4. Public Education and Outreach**

#### General outreach

- Improve the SMBRC’s website to have better access to meeting minutes and the State of the Bay Report.
- Advertise better and distribute widely the new State of the Bay Report. Ask every city to post or provide link to the report on their websites.
- Provide more and better background information (with Power Point presentation or slides) on the annual work plan – how it fits in with the strategic plan and monitoring plan. Same with presentations showing and clarifying the connection between SMBRC, TBF, SMBRA.
- Conduct more general and community-based outreach to let stakeholders know on an ongoing basis what’s happening
- Share more information to let municipalities know about the projects and activities of the SMBNEP
- Partner with Sea Grant’s Urban Tides on outreach through social media. Work together more in community events.
- Develop booklets for birds in the region and other outreach materials.

#### Boater program

- Continue the suite of on-going education outreach in the Marina which covers a nice set of topics and engage boaters as well as help with the state of the marina.
- Facilitate a voluntary dye tablet program in Marina del Rey to address the continuing bacterial exceedance observed there. The dye program can be one similar to what the city of Avalon is doing as part of the sewage pumpout inspection and the boating education efforts.

#### PIE grant program

- Need funding support, such as PIE grant to continue implementing the Our Ocean Friendly Garden program.
- Streamline the administration of the PIE grant to lessen the time and resources burden for both TBF staff and the grantee and make it more proportionate to the typical small grassroots scale of the projects.

#### Seafood risk communication

- Support SMBNEP involvement in EPA's seafood risk communication program on PV Shelf. Get the information out to the public. Distribute education materials at events such as beach clean-up, etc.
- Need update on the latest results of seafood risk assessment and if there is any change in risk communication messages.

### **5. Planning, Monitoring, and Program Management**

#### BRP Implementation Financing

- Establish a mechanism and provide more incentives to get local groups more informed and involved in restoration and monitoring projects.
- Make the task on county-wide funding measure broader than the county only to also include other local measures.
- Have more involvement in the county-wide task force of city managers and council members working to find internal, county-wide funding mechanisms.
- Submit and/or support Proposition 1 grant funding applications for projects that address Bay Restoration Plan priorities.
- Help to get funding to meet the storm water management needs that have huge impact on city budget. Facilitate partnership as required to demonstrate by RFPs of a lot of grants.

#### Comprehensive Bay monitoring

- Focus monitoring on regional basis and away from being conducted currently by separate entities and jurisdictions.
- As wastewater discharger, support regional monitoring and surveys to assess ecological health. Prioritize and carry out fish larvae and deep water surveys as they are important data gaps.

- Support efforts to install high precision instrument packages for measurement of pH, DO, and pCO<sub>2</sub>, which will provide additional data on acidification and hypoxia in the Santa Monica Bay that can be used to better understand current and future impacts and trends.
- Support other research, monitoring, and planning efforts related to the causes and impacts of ocean acidification and hypoxia.
- Support work to implement the Comprehensive Monitoring Program, specifically the work to assess the applicability of ichthyoplankton meta-barcoding for routine monitoring and examining the pelagic monitoring data collected under the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) program, including sampling of multiple water parameters, fish larvae, and zooplankton.
- Conduct more sediment and benthic monitoring at storm drain outlets and wastewater outfall sites.
- Devote more effort for better assessment of the stream condition in the Bay watershed and fill the gap in the health index for streams in the State of the Bay Report.
- Implement larger, county-wide monitoring efforts for birds. Conduct general shorebird count, similar to the statewide pelican count.
- Facilitate sharing of citizen monitoring data sets such as those collected by Audubon. Utilize long-term bird count data collected by Audubon at Malibu which documented the decline of snowy plover population.
- Plan ahead and find ways to sustain the post-restoration monitoring at Malibu Lagoon after the five-year term of the current project.

#### Other

- Reassign the role of SMBRC and TBF under each work plan task all to the SMBNEP.
- Revise the title of the inter-agency involvement section of the work plan because the current title is misleading and would exclude involvement by TBF, which is not an agency.
- Reinstall staffing section in the work plan and better define/delineate responsibilities of SMBNEP staff.
- Convert the five tables featured at the annual WAC meeting into subgroups/committees that meet several times per year.
- Greater public oversight and accountability of projects funded by TBF/SMBRC/SMBRA.
- More transparency on who is working on what projects. Make clear if SMBRC is involved or not.
- More WAC workshops because on-line survey is limited to 300 words.
- Hold all staff working on behalf of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program to the same high standard of public transparency and accountability
- Reallocate money currently being used to pay for armed Sheriff's deputies at SMBRC meetings to the stewardship of public resources, such as the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve.
- Allow WAC members to determine meeting frequency and agendas, to form sub-committees (i.e. Work Groups), and to adopt position statements in order to be more effective and impactful.